

Impact Evaluation on Aquatic Resources

The purpose of the study is to determine if changes in TVA's reservoir system operating policies would produce greater overall public value.

Background

TVA is conducting a formal evaluation of its policies for operating the Tennessee River reservoir system, including an analysis of the economic impacts of any potential changes in these policies. Existing policies affect how much reservoir levels fluctuate, when changes in reservoir levels occur, and the amount of water flowing through the reservoir system at different times of the year, depending on rainfall.

The purpose of the study is to determine if changes in TVA's reservoir system operating policies would produce greater overall public value. Technical analyses will be performed to evaluate the impacts of TVA's current policies and the potential impacts of alternatives on a number of resource areas and other issues.

The two-year Reservoir Operations Study (ROS) is scheduled for completion in October 2003.

The impacts on aquatic resources will be evaluated as part of the ROS, and the results will be documented in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). TVA will conduct the study in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.

Potential Impacts

- Changes in reservoir system operating policies could alter conditions for reproduction, survival, and growth of aquatic life—for example, availability of shoreline and deeper habitats and volume of a reservoir with suitable dissolved oxygen and temperature conditions.
- These alterations, in turn, could have positive or negative impacts on fish communities and other aquatic life in reservoirs and tailwater areas below dams.

Geographic Areas

- The area to be evaluated for aquatic resources will be the reservoirs and their tailwaters.

Scope of Analysis

- The effects on fish communities and on the animals living on the reservoir or stream bottom will be analyzed to predict how changes in operations might affect water quality and habitat availability at various times of the year.
- Aquatic resources will be described and the potential effects assessed using data available from TVA aquatic monitoring programs and from sources outside TVA, as warranted.

For More Information

To submit comments or get additional information, members of the public are invited to visit TVA's Web site at www.tva.com, to call toll-free 888-882-7675, to fax TVA at 865-632-3146, or to write to ROS Project Manager David Nye, Tennessee Valley Authority, c/o WT 11A, 400 West Summit Hill Dr., Knoxville, TN 37902.